

Terror aftermath

Abbott refuses four times to disown support for IRA and ‘our struggle’

Anger as shadow home secretary says only ‘I don’t have the same hairstyle, I don’t have the same views’

By Laura Hughes
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

DIANE ABBOTT has refused to renounce her support for the IRA, saying only that views – and her hairstyle – have changed over the years.

The shadow home secretary refused four times to say that she “regrets” supporting the republican group, which murdered around 1,800 civilians and members of the security forces.

Ms Abbott said she had “moved on” from remarks she made in the Eighties, when she claimed her support for the IRA and declared “every defeat of the British state is a victory for all of us”.

Asked about her views on the IRA at the time, she yesterday told the BBC’s *Andrew Marr Show*: “It was 34 years ago, I had a rather splendid Afro at the time, I don’t have the same hairstyle, I don’t have the same views.”

“It was 34 years on. The hairstyle is gone, some of the views are gone.”

Amber Rudd, the Home Secretary, said: “What I would say to Diane Abbott is I have changed my hairstyle a few times in 34 years as well, but I have not changed my view about how we keep the British public safe.”

Sajid Javid, the Communities Secretary, wrote on Twitter: “Thirty four years ago I had a full head of hair but I still thought – aged 13 – the IRA was a vile terrorist group.”

In an interview with a pro-republican journal in the Eighties, Ms Abbott had said Ireland was “our struggle” and added: “A defeat in Northern Ireland would be a defeat indeed.”

The Labour MP, one of Jeremy Corbyn’s closest allies, added that she “couldn’t identify as British” and described Northern Ireland as an “enclave of white supremacist ideologies”.

Asked whether Ms Abbott’s hairstyle comments trivialised the IRA, Mr Corbyn told ITV’s *Peston On Sunday*: “Diane’s hairstyle is a matter for Diane.”

Pressed on the issue, he said: “We learnt, all of us, a lot from the whole experience of Northern Ireland.”

Asked whether Ms Abbott would be his home secretary, Mr Corbyn said: “Diane is our home affairs spokesperson, and I’m looking to appoint our shadow cabinet.”

Boris Johnson, the Foreign Secretary, said: “Families across the country today watching Diane Abbott and Jeremy Corbyn account for a lifetime



Diane Abbott told Andrew Marr: ‘The hairstyle is gone, some of the views are gone’

Long and short of it How her hair has changed over the years

1984

◆ While representing Labour on Westminster City Council, she had a short afro, which she says was inspired by the black activist Angela Davis. She has said the decision



to cut her hair off and have an afro was “political” and “about celebrating black power”.

1987

◆ She enjoyed having her hair in braids when she made history as the first black woman ever to be elected to Parliament. At the time, she said there were very few



women with braids in such a high-profile job, but insisted it “wasn’t a statement”.

1996

◆ As a backbench MP and a member of the Labour Party’s National Executive Committee, she sported a loose style of soft curls in a long bob. Ms Abbott says



she achieved this look by leaving in a set of hair rollers overnight.

2010

◆ When she stood as a candidate for Labour leader and later during her time as shadow minister for public health under Ed Miliband’s leadership of



Labour, she had a shorter, relaxed curl with a slight quiff on one side.

of sympathy for terrorism will be appalled.”

Ms Abbott was also challenged yesterday over her signing a parliamentary motion in 1989 calling for an end to “conspiratorial groups”. She said: “At that time, I and a lot of people felt MI5 needed reforming. It has since been reformed and of course I would not call for its abolition now.”

Questioned on why she had voted

Sturgeon drops hint she favours Corbyn for PM

By Auslan Cramb
SCOTTISH CORRESPONDENT

NICOLA STURGEON was accused yesterday of paving the way for a “coalition of chaos” between the SNP and Labour after indicating that she would rather see Jeremy Corbyn than Theresa May in Downing Street.

With the polls narrowing, she was asked in separate interviews if she would prefer Labour or the Tories to win the election. She said she did not want a Tory government, while adding that she did not think Mr Corbyn was a credible choice as prime minister.

But she also told the BBC’s *Andrew Neil Interview* programme that she would “look to be part of a progressive alliance” at Westminster if the election resulted in a hung parliament.

In an earlier interview with Sophie Ridge on Sky News, she was asked who she would prefer as prime minister and replied: “I don’t want to see Tory governments and Tory prime ministers. I think they do real damage to Scotland.”

Murdo Fraser, the Scottish Conservative MSP, said Ms Sturgeon had “conceded she wants to see Jeremy Corbyn in Downing Street ahead of Theresa May”.

Campaign trail diary

10 Days to go

Quote of the day

I had a rather splendid Afro at the time. I don’t have the same hairstyle, I don’t have the same views.’

Diane Abbott’s response to questions on statements she made in the Eighties

Nuttall warning

Paul Nuttall has said cutting immigration could damage the economy and suggested the impact would be “debatable”. The Ukip leader said levels were “unsustainable” and could end in “real trouble”.



Theresa and Philip May at church yesterday

Today

Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn will both be interviewed by Jeremy Paxman on Sky News and Channel 4 and take questions. Tim Farron will be in London. Paul Nuttall’s rescheduled interview with Andrew Neil airs on BBC One

Dementia tax could erase half of value of family home, claim Lib Dems

Families could see up to half the value of their homes put at risk under the Tories’ plans for a controversial “dementia tax”, it is claimed.

Amber Rudd, the Home Secretary, admitted yesterday that her party was “not sure” what the cap on care costs would be as it was subject to

a consultation that would take place after the General Election. But analysis by the Liberal Democrats assumes that 10 years of home

care at a cost of £14,560 a year, together with estate fees, would cost a total of £173,282. The average home is worth £317,281.



Above: police at the Munich Olympic siege. Jeremy Corbyn, pictured at a pro-Palestinian protest in London in 2009, attended a ceremony near the grave of one of the terrorists

Corbyn ‘must clarify views on Palestinian terrorism’

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very disturbing pattern of behaviour and we are seeking urgent clarification from the leader’s office on this matter.”

Simon Johnson, chief executive of the Jewish Leadership Council, added: “It is high time that Jeremy Corbyn clarify his views regarding Palestinian terrorism. At first sight, attending a wreath-laying ceremony for a known

and will stand up for the country’s interests in the Brexit negotiations. His record says otherwise.”

The Israeli embassy in London did not comment, saying it did not get involved in elections.

Last night, Mr Corbyn denied he had been honouring Bseiso, telling Sky News: “We were searching for peace in the Middle East. The only way we achieve peace is by bringing people together and talking to them.”

A source close to Mr Corbyn said he attended the ceremony because it was “commemorating the bombing of the PLO headquarters in Tunis in 1985” but he did not lay a wreath himself.

The source said: “In the same cemetery there are some other people in it. Some of these people – not Jeremy, he was just physically present – also laid a wreath on another grave.”

A spokesman for Mr Corbyn said: “This is an extremely tenuous set of connections”.

Last night, one of Mr Corbyn’s key aides suggested that he will try to continue as Labour leader even if the party is defeated in the general election.

Ian Lavery, Labour’s elections and campaign coordinator, told a rally in Glasgow that “whatever happens” the “Corbyn project” is only beginning. He added that the party was in the “long, long, long process of changing politics”.

Atif Bseiso, who was involved in the Munich massacre, was shot dead in Paris in 1992, allegedly by Mossad



May to send out ‘ad vans’ telling voters she must lead Brexit talks

Strategists hope focus on departure from EU will concentrate voters’ minds in final days of campaign

By Christopher Hope
CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THERESA MAY is to send out a fleet of “ad vans” to reinforce her Brexit message amid claims of a split among her most senior aides.

The Tory leader is considering dispatching the advertising vans around the country in a final bid to convince voters she is best placed to negotiate Britain’s exit from the European Union.

Tory strategists hope switching the focus to the fact that Brexit talks start just 11 days after next Thursday’s general election will concentrate minds among the electorate.

Mrs May will seek to stress the importance of Brexit talks when she appears in her first live election debate on Channel Four and Sky News tonight.

She will answer questions from Jeremy Paxman, the former BBC *Newsnight* presenter, and the studio audience after Jeremy Corbyn, her Labour rival, giving her the final word.

The ad vans will revive memories of Mrs May’s vans when Home Secretary, which bore the message “go home” for illegal immigrants. One Tory source said: “The key choice is who do you want at the negotiating table. We can’t have people thinking that there are free votes [for Labour].”

There was a boost for the Conservatives yesterday when the party’s lead over Labour started to widen. YouGov, which on Friday said the Tories were just five per cent ahead of Labour, said the party was now 7 points ahead.

The Conservative have already raised between £13million and £14million for their campaign and wants to raise another £2million over the remaining 10 days in order to hit its

spending limit. A Tory source said the cash would not be hard to raise from wealthy donors because “the prospect of Corbyn is so horrific they will help us out. There will be a final push”.

In addition to the ad vans, the party is planning to spend heavily on social media messages on mobile phones, rather than traditional billboards. Some donors were initially unhappy that the party’s social care plan to force wealthy pensioners to pay more for care in their homes had been poorly explained, and was dubbed the “dementia tax”, sources said.

Mrs May’s key aides – Fiona Hill and Nick Timothy – have also been reportedly “at loggerheads” over the strategy, with Ms Hill blaming Mr Timothy for

‘The key choice is who do you want at the negotiating table. People must realise the significance of their vote’

including it in the manifesto.

The *Daily Telegraph* has been told that Mr Timothy is now rarely seen at party headquarters, from where Ms Hill is running the communications campaign with Sir Lynton Crosby, the strategist who masterminded the party’s 2015 victory.

However, Sir Michael Fallon, the Defence Secretary, said the talk of division among the advisers was “rubbish” and blamed “Westminster tittle-tattle”.

After weeks of stressing the value of Mrs May’s leadership, the Tories are expected to push Boris Johnson, the Foreign Secretary, Amber Rudd, the Home Secretary and David Davis, the Brexit Secretary, to the fore.

A poster campaign is being launched today by the country’s biggest trade union, with billboards in the north of England bearing the message that the Conservative party is “no friend of the North”. Unite is targeting cities where the Tories have to make large inroads to deliver a landslide.

Harsher penalties for attacks on children

By Laura Hughes

PEOPLE who violently attack children will get longer jail terms under a Tory government, Theresa May will announce today.

The Prime Minister will promise to increase the number of prosecutions and do more to tackle the “hidden scandal” sweeping the nation.

A new domestic violence and abuse bill will create an aggravated offence allowing harsher punishments for cases involving children.

The moves come amid concerns that the legal system often falls short vic-

tims and that there are regional variations in police responses.

Mrs May will also pledge to appoint a domestic violence commissioner to stand up for victims and hold the police and the justice system to account.

Speaking ahead of the announcement, she said: “The last seven years of Conservative government have delivered real steps towards tackling domestic violence – we are punishing more perpetrators, and helping more victims get refuge and justice.”

“But we will launch a relentless drive to help survivors find justice and increase the number of successful

prosecutions. This hidden scandal, that takes place every day in homes across Britain, must be tackled head on.

“And we must respond to the devastating and lifelong impact that domestic abuse has on children, who carry the effects into adulthood.”

The Tories’ Party’s bill will extend the length of sentences for anyone who is found to have abused a child.

The bill will also introduce a statutory definition for domestic violence.

There are understood to be as many as two million victims of domestic abuse each year, according to the latest Crime Survey of England and Wales.

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